

## **THE EDUCATION SYTEM OF PAKISTAN :ISSUES ,PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS.**

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### **Introduction**

It is mandated in the Constitution of Pakistan to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years and enhance adult literacy. With the 18th constitutional amendment the concurrent list which comprised of 47 subjects was abolished and these subjects, including education, were transferred to federating units as a move towards provincial autonomy.

### **The Education System Of Pakistan:**

The education system of Pakistan is comprised of 260,903 institutions and is facilitating 41,018,384 students with the help of 1,535,461 teachers. The system includes 180,846 public institutions and 80,057 private institutions. Hence 31% educational institutes are run by the private sector while 69% are public institutes.

### **Problems:**

The issues lead to the comprehension of the problems which are faced in the development of the education system and the promotion of literacy. The study outlines seven major problems such as:

**1) Lack of Proper Planning:** Pakistan is a signatory to MDGs and EFA goals. However, it seems that it will not be able to achieve these international commitments because of financial management issues and constraints to achieve the MDGs and EFA goals.

**2) Social constraints:** It is important to realize that the problems which hinder the provision of education are not just due to issues of management by the government but some of them are deeply rooted in the social and cultural orientation of the people. Overcoming the latter is difficult and would require a

change in the attitude of the people until then universal primary education is difficult to achieve.

**3) Gender gap:** Major factors that hinder enrolment rates of girls include poverty, cultural constraints, illiteracy of parents and parental concerns about safety and mobility of their daughters. Society's emphasis on girl's modesty, protection and early marriages may limit family's willingness to send them to school. Enrolment of rural girls is 45% lower than that of urban girls; while for boys the difference is 10% only, showing that the gender gap is an important factor.

**4) Cost of education:** The economic cost is higher in private schools, but these are located in richer settlements only. The paradox is that private schools are better but not everywhere and government schools ensure equitable access but do not provide quality education.

**5) War on Terror:** Pakistan's engagement in the war against terrorism also affected the promotion of literacy campaign. The militants targeted schools and students; several educational institutions were blown up, teachers and students were killed in Balochistan, KPK and FATA. This may have to contribute not as much as other factors, but this remains an important factor.

**6) Funds for Education:** Pakistan spends 2.4% GDP on education. At the national level, 89% education expenditure comprises of current expenses such as teachers' salaries, while only 11% comprises of development expenditure which is not sufficient to raise the quality of education.

**7) Technical Education:** Sufficient attention has not been paid to the technical and vocational education in Pakistan. The number of technical and vocational training institutes is not sufficient and many are deprived of infrastructure, teachers and tools for training. The population of a state is one of the main elements of its national power. It can become an asset once it is skilled. Unskilled population means more jobless people in the country, which affects the national development negatively. Therefore, technical education needs priority handling by the government

Poverty, law and order situation, natural disasters, budgetary constraints, lack of access, poor quality, equity, and governance have also contributed to fewer enrolments.

## **Solutions**

There is a need for implementation of national education policy and vision 2030 education goals. An analysis of education policy suggests that at the policy level there are several admirable ideas, but practically there are some shortcomings also.

It may not be possible for the government at the moment to implement a uniform education system in the country, but a uniform curriculum can be introduced in educational institutes of the country. This will provide equal opportunity to the students of rural areas to compete with students of urban areas in the job market.

Since the majority of the Pakistani population resides in rural areas and the access to education is a major problem for them, it seems feasible that a balanced approach for formal and informal education be adopted. The government, as well as the non-government sector, should work together to promote education in rural areas.

The government should take measures to get school buildings vacated which are occupied by feudal lords of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab. Efforts should be made to ensure that proper education is provided in those schools.

The federal government is paying attention to the vocational and technical training, but it is important to make the already existing vocational and technical training centres more efficient so that skilled youth could be produced.

Since education is a provincial subject, the provincial education secretariats need to be strengthened. Special policy planning units should be established in provinces' education departments for the implementation of educational policies and the formulation of new policies whenever needed. The provincial education departments need to work out the financial resources required for realising the compliance of Article 25-A.

Federal Government should play a supportive role vis-à-vis the provinces for the early compliance of the constitutional obligation laid down in Article 25-A. Special grants can be provided to the provinces where the literacy rate is low.

Pakistan is not the only country which is facing challenges regarding the promotion of literacy and meeting EFA and MDGs commitments. Education remains a subject which is paid least attention in the whole South Asian region. UNDP report 2014 suggests that there has been an improvement in other elements of human development such as life expectancy, per capita income and human development index value (in past 3 years); but there has been no progress in the number of schooling years. The expected average for years of schooling in 2010 was 10.6 years but the actual average of schooling remained 4.7 for all South Asian countries. In the year 2013, the expected average number of years increased to 11.2 but the actual average of years of schooling of South Asian countries remained 4.7. Regional cooperation mechanism can also be developed to promote literacy in the South Asian region. Sharing success stories, making country-specific modifications and their implementation can generate positive results.

### **Recommendations:**

- Technical education should be made a part of secondary education. Classes for carpentry, electrical, and other technical education must be included in the curriculum.
- Providing economic incentives to the students may encourage the parents to send their children to school and may help in reducing the dropout ratio.
- The local government system is helpful in promoting education and literacy in the country. In a local government system, the funds for education would be spent on a need basis by the locality.
- Corruption in education departments is one of the factors for poor literacy in the country. An effective monitoring system is needed in education departments.
- For any system to work it is imperative that relevant structures are developed. Legislation and structure should be framed to plan for the promotion of education in the country. After the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment the education has become a provincial subject, therefore, the provinces should form legislation and design educational policies which ensure quality education.
- Unemployment of educated men and women is a major concern for Pakistan. There should be career counselling of the pupils in schools so that they have an understanding of the job market and they can develop their skills accordingly.
- Counselling of parents is required so that they can choose a career for their child which is market-friendly.
- There are two approaches to acquiring education: First, which is being followed by many in Pakistan is to get an education to earn bread and butter. The second approach is to get an education for the sake of personal development and learning. This approach is followed by affluent and economically stable people

who send their children to private schools and abroad for education. The problem arises when non-affluent families send their children to private schools, and universities. This aspiration for sending children for higher education is wrong because the country does not need managers and officers only. There are several other jobs where people are needed. Hence the mindset of sending one's children to university only for becoming officers and managers needs to be changed.

### **Conclusion:**

The reforms required in the education system of Pakistan cannot be done by the government alone, public private-participation and a mix of formal as well as non-formal education can pull out the majority of the country population from illiteracy. Similarly, to make the youth of the country asset, attention should be also paid to vocational-technical training.

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